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Bundy

ACTION: Amembassy, SAIGON

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Authority STATE letter FEB 6 1978

~~NOFORN~~

By isp, NARS, Date 9-4-79

Reprisal strikes February 7 - 8 and February 11 have in effect set in motion program of continuing US-GVN military actions against North Viet-Nam which were subject of discussions with Bundy group in Saigon last week and which in principle has been cleared at highest level, as noted .

There follow guidelines for the further elaboration of this program to assist Mission in developing specific military plans, guidelines for public relations and for conducting conversations with GVN. We wish emphasize that fundamental objective of program is to assure that, together with the way it is presented to Governments, that it conveys the desired messages to Hanoi, Peking and Moscow, to the Government and people of South Viet Nam, to Viet Cong, the American public and free world allies and neutrals. The message, already often stated, is that our actions are in response to the North Vietnamese open and covert encouragement and support of the Viet Cong efforts to

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subvert the GVN. If North Vietnamese interference should come to an end so would our retaliatory actions. While we maintain our desire to avoid spreading the conflict in Viet Nam, the U.S. and GVN feel compelled to take retaliatory action in response to North Vietnamese aggression.

(1) Reprisal strikes. In general reprisals will be made in response not to individual actions but to over-all VC program of terror and military pressure. While frequency of reprisals will be examined regularly in light of level of Viet Cong activity and in context of over-all political situation, at outset for planning problems we should count on reprisal every five or six days. Assuming no improvement in situation you should think in terms of gradual increase in intensity of program through greater frequency, heavier attacks, and moving attacks northward. Some reprisals may be specifically and directly responsive to Viet Cong actions such as knocking out railway bridges or installations following Viet Cong railway attacks.

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Cardinal principal with regard to reprisal strikes will be important participation of GVN forces to other military actions. There had been underway for some time a series of military operations against North Viet Nam which now should be reexamined in light of initiation of new program. Actions which had primarily harassment purpose will be evaluated here to determine desirability and need for their continuation and if so at what level. Various sea and air operations fall in this category and your views as to what should be future pattern are requested.

(2) Barrel Roll activities should continue, probably with some reshaping of mission in Laos and with extension up infiltration routes onto DRV territory. We are also contemplating instituting RECCE flights over the DRV on the Yankee Team pattern and your views solicited on both these possible innovations in order set stage for systematic study in Defense Department.

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